

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the claims in order to reduce the initial filing fee by deleting the multiple dependent claims from the application. Applicants retain the right to reintroduce any subject matter canceled by the present Amendment at any time during the prosecution of this application or any further application claiming benefit of this application.

In view of the above amendments to the claims, an early action on the merits is most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

By: Richard E. Fichter
Richard E. Fichter
Registration No. 26,382

625 Slaters Lane, 4th Fl.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 683-0500
Facsimile: (703) 683-1080

REF:kdd
PA01.wpd

December 20, 2001

Marked-Up Version Showing Changes Made

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace claims 6-7, 9 and 14-16 with the following amended claims.

6(Amended). An apparatus according to [any one of claims 1 to 5] claim 1 wherein the rotatable flail structure is adapted to rotate at at least 11 ms^{-1} when the device is in use.

7(Amended). An apparatus according to [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1 wherein the waste feed guide structure comprises a feed chute having a top chute portion and a bottom chute portion, the bottom chute portion being attached to the top chute portion at a hinged joint to allow independent movement of the bottom chute portion relative to the top chute portion about the hinged joint, wherein the bottom chute portion is operable to direct bagged solid waste introduced into the feed chute towards the rotatable flail structure when the apparatus is in use.

9(Amended). An apparatus as claimed in claim 7 [or claim 8] wherein the top chute portion comprises an adjustable back plate which is hinged to the bottom chute portion and capable of independent movement relative to the bottom chute portion about the hinge.

14(Amended). A waste processing system [according to claim 13] wherein the bag splitting apparatus is an apparatus according to [any one of claims 2 to 9] claim 2.

15(Amended). A waste processing system [according to claim 13 or claim 14] wherein the wet separator apparatus is an apparatus according to [any one of claims 10 to 12] claim 10.

16(Amended). A waste processing system according to [any one of claims 13 to 15] claim 13 wherein the bag splitting apparatus is positioned in close proximity to the surface of the liquid in the separator tank such that any bags that are not split as they pass through the bag splitter apparatus but float on the surface of the liquid in the separator tank are maintained in contact with the rotatable flail structure.

10022350 12001

10/022350

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A bag splitting apparatus for use in splitting open bags containing solid waste having a rotatable flail structure with a plurality of flexible flails attached to a rotatable mounting, the flails being formed from a material having a Young's modulus of less than 50GN/m²; and a waste feed guide structure capable of receiving bagged solid waste and directing it towards the rotatable flail structure when the apparatus is in use.

10/022350-12001